

After talks with Ecan's River engineer's in 2010 they came back and suggested a trial use a tractor in one section instead of heavy machinery;-

Hi Steve,

Please accept my apologies for the late reply; it has been a busy month as we are preparing for river rating district meetings.

Thanks for the suggestion of using Knapsack sprayers/ handgun sprayers.

This suggestion however, is as you have pointed out, labour intensive. The average area we spray in Bowyers Stream is 13 to 15 ha, this would equate to 600 + knapsacks. And as you can appreciate, this is a lot of time and manpower we don't have and would be very expensive to our river ratepayers. Also we do have access problems along fence lines of the river, as there are only a few gates or access' out to the river from adjacent farmland.

However, after looking further into your concerns in question, of disturbance to riverbed, we do have another tool we have been using/ trialling that we have built up for use in the Hinds river, (please see attached photo) in the form of a tractor sprayer which may be able to be used from Hepburns rd/ Alan Smith Rd U/s to H72.

This has only the impact of leaving tyre marks, the terrain of Bowyers stream with larger boulders may not be conducive, but we have decided to trial this in Bowyers stream for the next round of spraying from Hepburns Rd upstream to H72. It is too rough above Arundel Rakia gorge rd for the use of this tractor. I believe this will have a far less impact on the stream bed, and has the accuracy of gps, and controlled rate of Chemical being applied.

Thanks for your input and interest into our operations, your contribution is appreciated

Kind regards

David Maharey

From: Steve Gerard [<mailto:steve.gerard@extra.co.nz>]

Sent: Tuesday, 16 February 2010 9:30 a.m.

To: David Maharey

Subject: RE: Bowyers Stream again

Hi David,

Thanks for your very comprehensive reply. It explains a lot about the reasons why the work is carried out in the manner it is. And there's no doubt keeping the weeds under control does benefit the fishing experience and certainly I'm pleased that a helicopter is being used where it can be.

It seems that the other option for the part above Hepburn's Road would be to do it by hand using backpack spray units or long hoses with hand gun sprayers. I've used these systems and there's little doubt that it could be done this way. Snags could be removed or reduced with a chainsaw. Access could be from adjacent farmland so no vehicle necessarily needs to be driving in the river. Likewise if there was a more serious issue that needed a dozer, then access via adjacent farmland is the less intrusive option. While this would be more labour intensive the impact would be minimal and targeted and it would certainly address the issues from a fishing prospective.

Since we agree that Bowyers is as good as it is then I think the extra effort to minimise any impact would be worth that effort and something your organisation could be proud of.

Let me know what you think of this suggestion and whether it could work for you

Kind Regards

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From: David Maharey [<mailto:david.maharey@ecan.govt.nz>]
Sent: Friday, 5 February 2010 4:11 p.m.
To: Steve Gerard
Cc: Daniel Harrison
Subject: RE: Bowyers Stream again

Hi Steve,

Thanks for expressing your concerns with the works undertaken in Bowyers Stream. We take feedback such as yours very seriously.

If I may, I'd like to address some of the concerns you outlined:

1. I agree that Bowyers is a fantastic little fishing stream with high fishing, ecological, and recreational values. The River Engineering section has been undertaking works in Bowyers Stream for several decades and we're pleased that this is still regarded as a high value fishing stream despite (or arguably contributed by) the river work we do.
2. The timing is unfortunate, and I regret any lost fishing time to those involved. We try to keep the maintenance of Bowyers Stream to once every three years to lessen the impact. We are restricted with our spraying maintenance to times of active growth in weed species, and undertake other necessary river works at the same time as spraying to reduce ratepayer expenditure. However, your input into a more appropriate time that better suits fishing while remaining within the critical spray period is welcome.

3. The work undertaken in this part of the river is restricted to spraying the fairway and removing snags. This is all that the people who live next to the river or directly benefit from the flood and erosion protection works pay for in there rates. In our experience, trees pushed into the side seldom wash out as they are either tied in with wire rope or re-grow and become anchored by roots. As discussed in the previous email I have spoken to the contractor concerning the dozer blade marks in the stream gravel.
4. The use of helicopters this year in Bowyers Stream has been from the bottom up to Hepburns Road. This was to reduce the impact on the lower stream as you have pointed out. Because the stream narrows further up it becomes a safety issue for the helicopter, restricting our operation to ground based methods. The use of a dozer rather than a 4WD is due to the roughness and larger boulders in this part of the stream.
5. The herbicides we use are governed by our resource consents. We use Glyphosate (510) (same active ingredient as Roundup). Using selective herbicides like Grazon or Trounce can have a devastating effect on aquatic life as the woody weed killers and Triclopyr based chemicals are toxic to marine life. We appreciate that willows provide food for fish populations.
6. The area of Glentunnel on the Selwyn River is not in a river rating district, and therefore any flood and erosion protection work is undertaken by the landowners who hold resource consents, at their expense. We are responsible for flood and erosion protection works along stretches of river where adjacent landowners pay a targeted rate to have such work undertaken. Doing nothing and letting the river do its own thing would be totally unacceptable to the adjacent landowners and we could face criminal charges under the Local Government Act and the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Act for negligence. We frequently get requests from landowners outside the rated area along the Selwyn River seeking advice on erosion problems they have there, which as mentioned, they remedy themselves.
7. The spraying work we undertake in Bowyers Stream is authorised under our resource consent. Like I have said above, this work is only undertaken once every three years.
8. I refer you to your opening statement in number one, "Bowyers is by far the best and most significant small stream fishery in mid Canterbury. It is fished regularly along most of its length. Many who fish it are overseas guided fishermen such is the value and importance of this stream". After many decades of doing the work we undertake, is it not by far the best and most significant small stream fishery in Canterbury? I would like to see this continue to be so. The work we do reduces erosion of the banks, which in turn reduces water turbidity. Spraying the weeds provides clear islands which are preferable for native bird habitat, and helps to mobilise gravel to ensure a river system more natural compared to one dominated by the characteristics influenced by stabilisation caused by exotic weed species. Snags in the river deflect flows towards the bank which increases erosion and flood risk (as well as tangle fishing lines). Far from destroying the environment, one who can see beyond the next five minutes knows that the work we do provides many valuable benefits, both environmental and socio-economic. As the old cliché says "you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs".
9. As a ratepayer you can have your say at the Ashburton Rivers Rating District meetings which are held every year and attended by liaison committee members made up of the public. In the ECan River Engineering section we have a great working relationship with the public as every year we meet with ratepayers and give an account of how we have spent the money and have budgets approved for next years work.

Kind regards

David Maharey

From: Steve Gerard [<mailto:steve.gerard@xtra.co.nz>]
Sent: Wednesday, 3 February 2010 9:21 a.m.
To: David Maharey
Subject: Bowyers Stream again

Hi Dave,

Mark Webb forwarded your message onto me.

I have been in touch with your office in the past regarding these river control works but I don't recall who I spoke to.

One of my shop customers who flies over from France each year to fish our local streams alerted me to the work going on in Bowyers stream when he found everything dirty and unfishable.

I realise this work is done as flood protection work.

Formerly I have worked as a fishing guide based in Methven so have very good knowledge of our local fisheries so I want to point out what I see as issues in the hope that we work together to improve things

1. Bowyers is by far the best and most significant small stream fishery in mid Canterbury. It is fished regularly along most of its length. Many who fish it are overseas guided fishermen such is the value and importance of this stream
2. The timing, the middle of the fishing season is totally unreasonable (Surely any stream work could be done outside of the fishing and spawning periods)
3. The use of a bulldozer to the degree it has been used is excessive. The dozer has had its blade down over much to the streams length altering the natural character of the stream bed and flows. In at least one place the dozer had entered a pool, most likely to remove a willow, however the willow was pushed up against the far bank, it's very clear that the next flood will simply wash this out again no doubt depositing it mid stream again so what is being achieved by doing this? It's my opinion that a bulldozer should only be used in this size stream when absolutely necessary.
4. The method. I have noted helicopters spraying in the Ashburton river bed, this is a much less invasive way of controlling weeds and surely it can be used in Bowyers
5. I question the use of a broad spectrum spray that kills everything including grasses when there are selective herbicides that will only kill the woody plants. The broad spectrum spray removes the insect habitat that provides food for trout, like wise spraying willows over hanging the river does the same.
6. I also have considerable experience guiding on the Selwyn river in the area above Glentunnel. I have never seen this sort of work carried out on that stream yet it is a very similar river system with similar flows. The river is left to do its own thing with apparently little consequence. I suggest you do the same in Bowyers
7. I question whether this sort of work complies fully with the Resource Management act particular with regard to protection of significant sports fisheries
8. When you consider Ecan pays to restore other water ways this sort of work is completely the opposite destroying a valued environment.
9. As a rate pay I question whether this work provides value for rate payers money?

Overall it is extremely disappointing to find again that your organization has been in this stream again showing very little regard for the environment, particularly since I have pointed out these concerns before. Everyone who has seen those pictures has expressed the same sentiments

Kind Regards

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The Tractor;



Below; Note also if you look past what the dozer has done, in the back ground you can see what a delightful stream this is – they are prepared to listen!









